

Title 10 DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

Subtitle 42 BOARD OF SOCIAL WORK EXAMINERS

Chapter 06 Continuing Education Requirements

Authority: Health Occupations Article, §§19-205 and 19-308, Annotated Code of Maryland

.01 Scope and Objectives.

A. This chapter establishes continuing education requirements for licensed social workers in the State.

B. The objectives of this chapter include:

- (1) Maintenance and enhancement of professional competence;
- (2) Ongoing improvement of professional skills and knowledge; and
- (3) Enrichment of social work services provided to the citizens of Maryland.

.02 Definitions.

A. In this chapter, the following terms have the meanings indicated.

B. Terms Defined.

(1) "Approved programs" means programs that are presented by professionals who are qualified in the content area with education as the focus and that:

- (a) Are offered or provided under the auspices of an authorized sponsor; or
- (b) Are offered or approved by the Board.

(2) "Authorized sponsor" means an individual or organization that is authorized to provide continuing education programs and to offer under its auspices programs as set forth in Regulation .05 of this chapter.

- (3) "Board" means the Board of Social Work Examiners.
- (4) "Category I" means activities that are formally organized face-to-face learning experiences provided by Board-approved sponsors.
- (5) "Category II" means activities that are independent, less structured learning experiences.
- (6) "Committee" means the Advisory Committee for Continuing Education appointed by the Board.
- (7) "Continuing education" means completing approved programs designed to provide:
- (a) Enhancement of social work practice, values, skills, and knowledge; and
 - (b) Enrichment of social work services and competence.
- (8) "Continuing education unit" means 1 hour (60 minutes) of an approved program as set forth in Regulation .04 of this chapter.
- (9) "Extension" means a period of time, not to exceed 6 months for renewal or 1 year for reactivation or reinstatement, that the Board authorizes to permit additional time for the social worker to obtain the required continuing education units needed for renewal, reactivation, or reinstatement of a license as set forth in Regulation .08 of this chapter.
- (10) "Renewal date" means the date the license expires, as specified in the notice sent to the social worker by the Board in accordance with Health Occupations Article, §19-308(b), Annotated Code of Maryland.
- (11) "Renewal period" means the period from the date the license was issued or November 1 of the renewal year to October 31 of the expiration year.

.03 Continuing Education Requirements.

A. The Board shall renew a license for an additional 2-year period if the social worker:

(1) Completes 40 (30 for Licensed Social Work Associates) continuing education units within the renewal period, of which a minimum of:

(a) 20 (15 for Licensed Social Work Associates) continuing education units shall be obtained from approved programs which are Category I; and

(b) 3 of the required Category I continuing education units shall have a content area focusing on ethics and professional conduct, including boundary issues, or pertaining to the standards of practice and laws governing the profession of social work in Maryland;

(2) Submits an application as set forth in COMAR 10.42.01 attesting to completion of the required continuing education units in approved programs; and

(3) Completes the required continuing education units within a 2-year period as set forth in §B of this regulation.

B. Time Frame.

(1) Renewed licenses are valid for a 2-year period from November 1 through and including October 31, during which time continuing education units may be earned.

(2) Continuing education units obtained in one renewal period may not be carried over to the next renewal period.

.04 Continuing Education Activities.

A. The social worker shall complete continuing education units relating to the practice of social work that foster improvement, advancement, and extension of the social worker's professional skill, knowledge, and competence.

B. Documentation shall be provided for the continuing education units listed in §§C—F of this regulation as set forth in Regulation .07 of this chapter.

C. Continuing Education Unit.

(1) In an academic classroom setting in an accredited academic institution, if a course is taken for academic credit, 1 academic credit is equal to 5 continuing education units.

(2) In an academic classroom setting in an accredited academic institution, if a course is audited, 1 academic credit is equal to 3 continuing education units.

(3) Programs may include the terms "contact hour", "CEU", "clock hour", and "hour" in the description of the course. Any program described with these terms that lasts 60 minutes provides 1 continuing education unit.

D. Of the 40 (30 for Licensed Social Work Associates) required continuing education units, 20 (15 for Licensed Social Work Associates) shall be earned and all may be earned from one or any combination of the following Category I activities:

(1) A course, including but not limited to a series of learning experiences with a specific content and offered for credit, noncredit, or audit by an accredited educational institution;

(2) A workshop, including but not limited to a session designed to bring together individuals around a common theme to solve problems and gain new knowledge, skills, and attitudes, with ample opportunity to interact;

(3) A seminar, including but not limited to a group of social workers who meet under expert leadership or a resource individual who conducts a discussion on a specific topic;

(4) A symposium, including but not limited to a presentation or presentations by professional specialists on a particular subject;

(5) A conference, including but not limited to sessions of 1 or more days duration designed to explore a central theme;

(6) Attendance at programs offered at professional or scientific meetings of local, State, regional, national, and international professional or scientific organizations; and

(7) Attending staff development, professional training, and invited in-house speaker sessions, including but not limited to an educational program planned by an agency to assist employees in becoming knowledgeable and competent about professional social work practice.

E. Of the 40 (30 for Licensed Social Work Associates) required continuing education units, a maximum of 20 (15 for Licensed Social Work Associates) continuing education units may be earned from one or any combination of the following Category II activities:

(1) Peer case conferences among licensed social workers designed to promote more effective interventions and advanced practice;

(2) Journal clubs that meet for at least 1 hour and are organized for the purpose of examining the literature and incorporating in the discussion the application of current literature to social work practice;

(3) Preparing and presenting approved face-to-face programs of instruction with 1 hour of preparation or presentation equal to 1 continuing education unit up to a maximum of 12 hours;

(4) Preparing and presenting a scientific or professional paper at a meeting of a professional or scientific organization with 1 hour of preparation or presentation equal to 1 continuing education unit up to a maximum of 12 hours;

(5) Authoring a professional publication (including peer-reviewed journals, books, and other professional publications) with 1 hour of authoring equal to 1 continuing education unit earned at the time the publication is published up to a maximum of 12 hours;

(6) Teaching a social work related course in an academic setting;

(7) Home-study, audiovisual and Internet on-line courses provided by an approved sponsor; and

(8) Taking foreign or sign language courses intended to enhance the delivery of social work services up to a maximum of 6 hours.

.05 Authorization of Sponsors and Approval of Continuing Education Programs.

A. Automatically Authorized Sponsors.

(1) Automatically authorized sponsors shall offer continuing education programs that meet the objectives set forth in Regulations .01B and .04 of this chapter.

(2) The following are automatically authorized sponsors:

(a) National, regional, or State accredited academic institutions offering academic courses or programs recognized as acceptable social work curriculum subject areas;

(b) State, regional, national, or international social work associations, including but not limited to social work licensing boards, the Association of Social Work Boards, and the National Association of Social Workers; and

(c) State, regional, national, or international non-social-work professional membership organizations providing programs that are relevant to the professional development of social workers.

B. Board Authorized Sponsors.

(1) Individuals and organizations not included in §A(2) of this regulation may become authorized sponsors of continuing education programs by:

(a) Submitting an application on a form provided by the Board at least 45 days before conducting the sponsor's first program;

(b) Paying a fee as provided in COMAR 10.42.05.02; and

(c) Being approved by the Board.

(2) Board authorized sponsors will receive authorization upon approval and shall provide to the Board all program announcements.

C. The Board shall establish a committee for continuing education that is responsible for recommending to the Board approval for proposed activities, sponsors, and programs offered by individuals or organizations that come under §A(2) of this regulation.

D. The Board shall maintain a roster of authorized sponsors.

E. Authorized Sponsor.

(1) An authorized sponsor shall:

(a) Include the following in the program announcement, flyer, or brochure:

- (i) The date, title, location, objectives, and content of the program;
- (ii) The number of continuing education units that will be awarded by the sponsor on a certificate awarded to the social worker on completion of the program;
- (iii) A statement that the named sponsor is authorized by the Board; and
- (iv) A statement that the named sponsor maintains responsibility for the program;

(b) Include the following on a program certificate or letter of completion:

- (i) The name of the social worker;
- (ii) The date, title, and location of the program;
- (iii) The number of continuing education units that are being awarded to the social worker on completion of the program only for actual time in attendance;
- (iv) An authorizing name, signature, and contact information for the person responsible for awarding the certificate or letter of completion;
- (v) A statement that the named sponsor is authorized by the Board; and
- (vi) A statement that the named sponsor maintains responsibility for the program; and

(c) Maintain documentation of continuing education activity for 4 years, which may include pretests and post-tests, but shall include:

- (i) Registration and attendance records;
- (ii) Stated purpose;
- (iii) Content of presentation;
- (iv) Time and length of activity; and
- (v) Participant evaluations.

(2) The Board may audit authorized sponsors' continuing education programs and activities at any time.

F. Suspension or Revocation of an Authorized Sponsor. Authorization as a sponsor may be suspended or revoked if the sponsor does not comply with the requirements of §E of this regulation or the criteria set forth in Regulation .04 of this chapter.

.06 Exceptions from Any of the Requirements.

Before attending a program, a social worker requesting an exception from any of the requirements of this chapter shall provide:

A. Official documentation that confirms circumstances beyond the control of the social worker because of:

(1) A functional impairment or prolonged illness that has been diagnosed by a health care practitioner;

(2) Mandatory military service or deployment;

(3) A prolonged absence from the United States;

(4) Officially declared disasters; or

(5) Financial hardship;

B. Documentation that describes the continuing education programs selected by the social worker considered equivalent to continuing education activities described in this chapter; and

C. An acceptable procedure for documenting the continuing education units.

.07 Reporting, Documenting, and Auditing Compliance with Continuing Education Requirements.

A. A social worker who has completed the continuing education requirements shall attest to that on a form supplied by the Board as part of the application for license renewal, reinstatement, or reactivation.

B. The Board shall audit a percentage of social workers, to be selected by the Board, for each renewal period.

C. On request by the Board, a social worker shall provide full documentation of the continuing education units completed in accordance with the requirements of §D of this regulation.

D. Documentation. A social worker shall provide to the Board:

- (1) An official transcript for continuing education units earned in a course taken for credit;
- (2) A certificate of completion for approved programs;
- (3) If a certificate of completion is not available:
 - (a) Dates on which the program was presented;
 - (b) Names of the presenters;
 - (c) Topics presented; and
 - (d) An outline of the presentation;
- (4) A reprint of the social worker's completed publication;
- (5) If a certificate of completion is not available for an audiovisual instructional program or a home study course, proof of completion of the program or course, such as a post-test passing score or other satisfactory proof as determined by the Board;
- (6) Proof of presentations made; and
- (7) Topics, dates, times, and names of participants in structured peer-case conferences and journal club activities.

E. Record Retention for Active, Expired, or Inactive License.

(1) Active Licenses.

- (a) A social worker with an active license shall retain records documenting completion of continuing education requirements for 2 years after the licensing renewal date for which the report of continuing education was submitted to the Board.
- (b) The documentation required in §E(1)(a) of this regulation may be requested by the Board at any time within that 2-year period.

(2) Expired Licenses. A social worker with an expired, non-renewed license shall:

- (a) Retain records documenting completion of continuing education requirements for each 2-year period that the license was expired, up to a maximum of 40 (30 for Licensed Social Work Associates) continuing education units; and
- (b) File with the Board documentation of completion of continuing education units at the time of reinstatement or submit a written request for an extension of time in order to obtain the required credit hours.

(3) Inactive Licenses. A social worker with an inactive license shall:

(a) Retain records documenting completion of continuing education requirements for the 2 years immediately preceding reactivation; and

(b) File with the Board documentation of completion of continuing education units at the time of reactivation or submit a written request for an extension of time in order to obtain the required credit units.

F. Responsibility for Conducting the Audits.

(1) The Board staff shall:

(a) Review and evaluate the documentation submitted for the purpose of the audits; and

(b) Report the findings to the Board.

(2) The Board may require a social worker to submit a copy of the purpose, objectives, and content areas from the continuing education program.

(3) The Board may require a social worker to obtain additional continuing education units if a program is disapproved as a result of a review and evaluation.

(4) The Board may take disciplinary action under COMAR 10.42.04 against any social worker who fraudulently attests to or does not submit continuing education documentation.

.08 Extension of Time.

A. A social worker shall file a request for an extension of time, including the supporting documentation, with the Board. The request shall be in writing and filed before August 31 of the renewal year.

B. The Board shall consider and render a decision on the request within 45 days of receiving the written request.

C. The Board may grant an extension and conditionally renew a license for up to 6 months if the Board determines that:

(1) Failure to fulfill the requirements is a result of:

(a) Functional impairment;

(b) Prolonged illness;

(c) Mandatory military service or deployment;

(d) A prolonged absence from the United States;

(e) An officially declared disaster; or

(f) Financial hardship; and

(2) The social worker attempted to meet the requirements.

D. Failure to obtain the required continuing education units on or before the 6-month extension shall result in the social worker's inability to practice social work in Maryland. Alternatively, the social worker may submit an application for inactive status.

E. The Board may grant an exception for all or part of the continuing education requirements for circumstances set forth in Regulation .06 of this chapter.

F. Continuing education hours earned after October 31 of the second year to fulfill the conditions of an extension may be credited only to the preceding 2-year period.

G. The Board shall audit a social worker who has been granted an extension of time for the completion of continuing education requirements.

.09 Consequences of Failure to Comply with Continuing Education Requirements.

The Board shall notify a social worker by first class mail that the license has not been renewed if the following has occurred:

A. The Board has not received the required certification of completion of continuing education requirements by October 31 of the renewal year and an extension has not been requested;

B. Continuing education requirements have not been met, and an extension request has been denied by the Board;

C. An extension was not submitted to the Board; or

D. The social worker has not responded to audit requirements within the time required.

.10 Reinstatement of Licenses.

A social worker whose license has not been renewed is entitled to reinstatement within 5 years of the date the license expired, by:

A. Paying the reinstatement fee established by the Board, as provided in COMAR 10.42.05.02; and

B. Demonstrating to the Board that the social worker has met all continuing education requirements by obtaining 40 (30 for Licensed Social Work Associates) continuing education units in the 2 years preceding the social worker's application for reinstatement.

.11 Reactivation of Licenses.

A social worker whose license was placed on inactive status is entitled to reactivation within 5 years of the date the license expired, by:

A. Paying the reactivation fee established by the Board, as provided in COMAR 10.42.05.02; and

B. Demonstrating to the Board that the social worker has met all continuing education requirements by obtaining 40 (30 for Licensed Social Work Associates) continuing education units in the 2 years preceding the social worker's application for reactivation.

Administrative History

Effective date:

Regulations .01—.07 adopted as an emergency provision effective March 22, 1994 (21:8 Md. R. 666); adopted permanently effective September 12, 1994 (21:18 Md. R. 1509)

Regulation .04A amended effective August 12, 1996 (23:16 Md. R. 1176)

Regulations .01—.06 repealed and new Regulations .01—.12 adopted effective November 1, 2003 (29:9 Md. R. 745)

Regulation .11 repealed and Regulation .12 recodified to be Regulation .11 effective January 1, 2007 (33:26 Md. R. 1997)

Regulations .01—.11 repealed and new Regulations .01—.11 adopted effective March 22, 2010 (37:6 Md. R. 478)